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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Programme of work for 2013

I. Mandate of the Committee

1. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for 2013 is contained in General Assembly resolutions 67/20, 67/21 and 67/22.

2. In its resolution 67/20, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", the General Assembly expressed its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the Assembly and took note of its annual report (A/67/35), including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof, requested it to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process for the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people and authorized it to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it might consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session and thereafter. It also requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate. It requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. The Assembly invited all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its

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tasks and requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities in this regard.

3. In its resolution 67/21, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance. It requested the Division to continue to monitor developments relevant to the question of Palestine, organize international meetings and conferences in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, liaise and cooperate with civil society and parliamentarians, develop and expand the "Question of Palestine" website and the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), prepare and widely disseminate publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine and develop and enhance the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority in contribution to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Assembly also requested the Division, as part of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, to continue to organize, under the guidance of the Committee, an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights or a cultural event in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and encouraged Member States to continue to give the widest support and publicity to the observance of the Day of Solidarity.

4. In its resolution 67/22, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 2012-2013, and outlined a number of specific activities to be carried out under the programme.

5. The Committee has reviewed the various aspects of its own programme of work and that of the Division for Palestinian Rights, as well as of the mandates governing them. It will continue to make adjustments in this programme in the course of 2013 in order to enhance its responsiveness to developments in the peace process and the situation on the ground, as well as to increase its effectiveness in promoting the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

II. The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

6. Since the submission of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly, the volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, ongoing violations by Israel, the occupying Power, and the deadlock in the political process have remained a cause for serious concern.[1]

[1] Developments prior to 6 October 2012 were reflected in the report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/67/35).

7. In November 2012, the violence in and around Gaza, which had been on the rise, sharply escalated following the assassination by Israel of the leader of the Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades. During the Israeli military operation that followed, air strikes targeted some 1,500 sites in Gaza, the majority in densely populated civilian areas. A total of 158 Palestinians, predominantly non-combatants, including women and children, were reported killed and over 1,200 were injured. The homes of alleged militants, media facilities and other civilian infrastructure were among the targets. More than 10,000 Palestinians were internally displaced by the Israeli military assaults and 450 housing units were destroyed or sustained major damage. During the same period, 1,506 rockets were fired from Gaza at Israeli population centres. Six Israelis died and 247 were injured in conflict-related violence.

8. The engagement of the international community was integral to efforts to mitigate and defuse the crisis. Foreign ministers from States members of the League of Arab States and Turkey undertook a solidarity visit to the Gaza Strip. Intensive diplomacy efforts by the Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, by foreign ministers from States members of the League of Arab States, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France, Germany and the United States of America, and by other world leaders, were followed by the conclusion on 21 November 2012 of a ceasefire agreement under Egyptian auspices, providing for the cessation of hostilities and the easing of some aspects of the Israeli blockade, which has been imposed on Gaza since 2007. The ceasefire has largely held. Negotiations on the implementation of other aspects of the agreement are ongoing. The Security Council held one emergency meeting and several consultations during the crisis but Council action remained blocked, with the exception of a statement to the press (SC/10829) on 21 November 2012.

9. On 29 November 2012, the General Assembly, during a session addressed by President Mahmoud Abbas, adopted resolution 67/19, which accorded Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations. The resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 138 votes in favour, 9 against and 41 abstentions and was widely viewed as a significant multilateral achievement for Palestine. The members of the Committee gave overwhelming backing to the resolution and displayed solidarity with Palestine. Two members of the Committee, who participated at the foreign minister level and addressed the Assembly prior to the voting, gave strong support to the resolution, and thus to the inalienable right of the State of Palestine to wider international recognition. The Government of Israel, however, reacted negatively to the resolution by adopting a series of punitive measures, which included an acceleration and intensification of its illegal settlement campaign and the confiscation of Palestinian Authority tax revenues, ostensibly to repay its electricity debts to Israel, but a measure clearly declared as reprisal for the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 67/19.

10. The Government of Israel approved construction plans for some 3,000 housing units in settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and decided to accelerate the construction of 6,500 settlement units already approved. It also decided to unfreeze plans for the construction of a settlement in a crucial area commonly referred to as the so-called "E-1" area which, if completed, would make a territorially contiguous State of Palestine virtually impossible. The international diplomatic response was vigorous: foreign ministries in capitals in Europe and elsewhere summoned Israeli ambassadors to protest these provocative steps. However, formal action in the Security Council remained blocked. Thus, on

19 December 2012, all Council members, with the exception of one, made public statements criticizing Israel's recent provocative settlement announcements and ongoing violations and demanding an immediate end to all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

11. The seizure by Israel of over $100 million in monthly Palestinian customs clearance revenues, compounded by the delays in the provision of pledged emergency financial assistance by a number of Arab countries, aggravated the already critical budget deficit of the Palestinian Authority, compromising its ability to meet its payroll obligations and deliver essential public services. The Government's actions to mitigate the crisis by securing bridging loans from private banks have had a limited impact. There have been strikes and other protests by Government employees in connection with the delays in the payment of salaries.

12. The Committee welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 67/19 granting Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations. It expresses the hope that the new political reality will help create a more equitable foundation from which to relaunch and reinvigorate the Middle East peace process. This development is apt to promote respect for international law and accountability for its breaches by improving access to legal remedies. The Committee hopes that this decision will also provide the needed impetus for an expedited and positive consideration of the application by the State of Palestine for membership of the United Nations, which has been before the Security Council since 23 September 2011.

13. Having monitored the situation closely, the Committee would like to register its utmost concern over the grave financial crisis besetting the Government of the State of Palestine, which undermines the accomplishments of its national institution-building programme. The Committee strongly condemns the seizure by Israel of the Palestinian revenues, regardless of the pretext, and calls for their immediate transfer in accordance with the Paris Protocol. All outstanding financial claims should be resolved through the bilateral mechanisms established for this purpose. The Committee calls on the international community, including the United Nations, to compel Israel to meet its binding obligations and guarantee Palestinian revenue flows against seizure in the future. While expressing deep gratitude to donors who have provided vital additional assistance in the recent period, notwithstanding the challenging financial environment, the Committee is also calling on all donors who have not already done so, to expedite the delivery of pledged aid.

14. The Committee reiterates that all settlement construction, including the so-called "natural growth", is illegal and must be halted immediately. Measures taken to retroactively "legalize" settlement outposts in contravention of the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the road map should likewise be rescinded. The latest Israeli settlement activities, in particular those related to the "E-1" area, pose a particularly ominous threat to the two-State solution. It is recognized by all, with the exception of Israel, the occupying Power, that settlements in the Occupied West Bank, including in Occupied East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law, that they violate numerous relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and that they contravene Israel's obligations under the road map. Settlement activities constitute grave breaches under the Fourth Geneva Convention and war crimes under article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The Committee's position is that, in

addition to being illegal, settlement construction also undermines trust between the two sides and obstructs the prospects for the resumption of credible Israeli-Palestinian negotiations for the achievement of a just solution on all permanent status issues. The objective of these negotiations is to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land since 1967, however the continued expansion of existing settlements and the construction of new settlements make this goal increasingly unattainable. Moreover, the settlements fuel tension, perpetuate conflict, and lead to violence, in particular by extremist Israeli settlers. Settlement activities also constitute grave violations of human rights and impede the socioeconomic development of the Palestinian people. The Committee welcomes in this regard the hearings, held in Amman in November 2012, by the international fact-finding mission on Israeli settlements dispatched by the Human Rights Council, while deploring the lack of cooperation by Israel. The Committee looks forward to the presentation of the report of the fact-finding mission to the Council in March 2013 and to consideration of the conclusions and recommendations contained therein.

15. The Committee has been greatly concerned by the worsening situation in and around Occupied East Jerusalem. The occupying Power has persisted with its illegal actions in the Holy City, including house demolitions, land confiscation, settlement expansion, revocations of residency rights, provocative activities at holy sites and deportations of Palestinian residents. The international community does not recognize Israel's unilateral claims to the entire city of Jerusalem and continues to reject and deem illegitimate Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem. East Jerusalem remains an integral part of the Palestinian Territory occupied by Israel since 1967. All actions taken by Israel that alter or purport to alter the demographic composition, character and status of the city are null and void and illegal under international law. The status of the city is clearly and unequivocally outlined and addressed in resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly, and the occupying Power must abide by and respect them. Israel's illegal actions have prevented any tangible improvements of the situation in the entire Occupied Territory, continuing to raise tensions and casting serious doubts on the real intentions of the Israeli leadership with regard to its stated interest in the negotiations on a permanent settlement on the basis of the two-State solution in accordance with the pre-1967 border.

16. In addition to the persistent expansion of settlements, Israeli military raids in the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continue to be an almost daily occurrence. As a result of those operations, Palestinian civilians have been killed and hundreds of others injured or arrested. The number of Palestinians, including children, arrested and interrogated by Israeli occupying forces, is on the rise. House demolitions in Area C in the West Bank have also continued, displacing Palestinians at an alarming rate, particularly in the Jerusalem and Jordan Valley areas. Israel continued to obstruct normal Palestinian economic development and international assistance projects in Area C. Settler violence and destruction of Palestinian properties also remain a cause for serious concern. Crimes by settlers, such as the uprooting of thousands of olive trees belonging to Palestinians, vandalism, theft, arson, the desecration of cemeteries and places of worship and the harassment and intimidation of Palestinians, are also on the rise and often seem to be tolerated by the Israeli authorities, who continually fail to hold settlers accountable for their crimes and violence against Palestinian civilians and properties.

17. The Israeli military assault on the Gaza Strip of November 2012 took a heavy toll in human lives and material damage, underscoring the fact that the situation in Gaza remains dangerously unstable and unsustainable. Key provisions of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) remain unfulfilled, while much of the infrastructure and homes destroyed in the 2008-2009 war have not been rebuilt. While applauding the diplomatic efforts of Egypt, the Secretary-General and other world leaders, who played a decisive role in bringing the fighting to a halt, the Committee is dismayed by the inaction of the Security Council in the crucial period prior to and during this latest crisis. The Committee remains deeply concerned about the critical situation in the Gaza Strip, particularly as a result of Israel's ongoing imposition of a blockade, which continues to negatively affect social and economic conditions, impede economic recovery, with rates of unemployment and poverty remaining high, and obstruct reconstruction. While noting the recent relaxation of restrictions by the Government of Israel on fishing in Gaza territorial waters and farming near the border fence area, and the approval of a limited entry of building materials for projects beyond those implemented by international organizations, the Committee stresses that these measures remain grossly inadequate compared to the actual reconstruction needs. The Committee maintains that comprehensive measures need to be taken to restore and revitalize the Gaza economy. It is imperative to embark without delay on the process of reconstruction of the thousands of homes, schools and hospitals destroyed and damaged during the Israeli military offensives against Gaza of December 2008 to January 2009 and November 2012. The isolation of the Gaza Strip from the rest of the Palestinian Territory and from the international community has to be lifted with the regular and sustained reopening of the border crossings for the movement of both persons and goods, including for exports from Gaza, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). Israel, the occupying Power, is obliged to create the necessary conditions, including reparations for reconstruction of civilian structures destroyed during the 2008-2009 war, and during the November 2012 conflict. The Committee again emphasizes the critical importance of international donor assistance for the functioning of the institutions of the State of Palestine at this time of crisis. It urges the international donor community to continue to provide assistance and to address the humanitarian and economic situation in the Gaza Strip as a matter of urgency.

18. The Committee condemns extrajudicial killings of Palestinians by the Israeli occupying forces, which often cause civilian casualties. It also denounces rocket attacks on Israel and calls for the cessation of these activities by Palestinian armed groups. The Committee reiterates that international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, must be respected by all parties. In this regard, the Committee appeals to all the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to fulfil their obligations in accordance with common article 1, which obliges them to respect and to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances, by convening a conference of the High Contracting Parties to determine practical collective measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

19. The Committee strongly supports and calls for the resumption of the permanent status negotiations between Israel and the State of Palestine on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. The continued support by the international community, including by the Security

Council and the General Assembly in accordance with their duties under the provisions of the Charter, is crucial for moving forward the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on all permanent status issues. The Committee welcomes the conclusions of the European Council on the Middle East Peace Process of 10 December 2012. The resumption of substantive peace negotiations conducted in good faith on the basis of clear parameters and within a fixed time frame would require a genuine commitment by the Government of Israel to the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, and to its road map obligations. First and foremost, Israel must stop any expansion of settlements, which are illegal and directly contradict the objectives of the peace process. Those basic steps should be buttressed by appreciable improvements in the situation on the ground. Israel should put an end to the crimes perpetrated by its settlers against Palestinians, the violent repression of peaceful Palestinian protestors, the military raids into areas under Palestinian control and the arrest and imprisonment of Palestinian civilians. Israel should also act forthwith to roll back other measures of the occupation, such as the Gaza blockade and the system of roadblocks and checkpoints, and transfer Area C to Palestinian jurisdiction as envisaged in the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

20. The Committee remains strongly opposed to the illegal construction of the wall in the West Bank, including in and around East Jerusalem, and finds this activity incompatible with the objective of achieving the two-State solution and a just and permanent settlement. In this regard, the Committee calls for full respect of the 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the relevant United Nations resolutions and for the full cessation of the construction of the wall, which has caused vast socioeconomic damage and the displacement of thousands of Palestinians, is obstructing freedom of movement and access to agricultural land and public services, and is severely impairing territorial contiguity and integrity.

21. The Committee remains concerned about the plight of the thousands of Palestinian political prisoners who remain in Israeli jails and detention centres and about the ongoing arrest by Israel of more Palestinians in daily raids. Of particular concern is the situation of prisoners remaining on a long-term hunger strike, whose health has deteriorated to the point where their life is in imminent danger. The Committee reminds Israel that it bears full responsibility for their well-being under international law. The Committee is of the view that Israel must release, immediately and unconditionally, all remaining Palestinian prisoners, including children, women and imprisoned members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. The Committee also stresses the need for Israel, the occupying Power, to cease all measures of collective punishment of the Palestinian people, which it has been imposing in direct contravention of international law.

22. The Committee maintains its position that the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory and the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, of which the right to self-determination is foremost. The occupation must end without conditions, which should allow the Palestinian people to achieve the independence of the State of Palestine on all of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, and to exercise their inalienable rights and allow for the achievement of a just solution to all outstanding core issues, including the plight of the Palestine refugees, on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Committee is of the view that the two-State solution should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008). It is convinced that only serious and sustained international engagement will bring about a peaceful and negotiated settlement of all outstanding issues and reverse the growing support for radical forces that promote violent and unilateral approaches to ending the conflict, for which there is no military solution. The Committee remains committed to contributing constructively and actively and to promoting, through its mandate, all international efforts aimed at the achievement of a peaceful settlement.

23. The Committee remains concerned that the divisions among Palestinian factions profoundly affect the legitimate Palestinian national interests and aspirations for statehood and peace, and welcomes the recent meetings in Cairo between the leaders of Fatah and Hamas, facilitated by the President of Egypt, which resulted in a number of practical undertakings for a speedy implementation, in good faith, of the reconciliation agreement. The Committee reiterates its call for reinvigorated efforts by all concerned parties to achieve unity on the basis of the prevailing consensus on the need to achieve the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and resolve all core final status issues, namely the Palestine refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, borders, water and security.

24. The Committee continues to support the Palestinian institution- and state-building initiatives and efforts aimed at achieving the independence of the State of Palestine, and calls on the international community to continue and expand its assistance in that endeavour. The Committee supports the call by President Abbas for Member States that have not already done so to recognize the State of Palestine. The Committee is of the view that the upgrade of the status of the State of Palestine in the United Nations from an observer entity to that of a non-member observer State is a historic event, providing the State of Palestine with new opportunities to engage United Nations system entities in efforts to resolve the conflict, to defend and promote the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, and to improve their socioeconomic conditions.

25. The Committee reaffirms that the United Nations should maintain its permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and norms of international law. As requested by the General Assembly, the Committee will continue to keep the situation under review and to promote a constructive analysis and discussion of these issues by the international community.

III. Priority issues in the programme of work of the Committee for 2013

26. The Committee considers that its own work and the programme of mandated activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights represent a significant contribution by the United Nations and its membership to the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee will continue to work towards heightening international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine, international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. Throughout 2013, its work will

remain focused on promoting a better understanding, as gauged by international public opinion, of the importance of ending the Israeli occupation and the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, as well as the urgency of bringing about a two-State solution.

27. The Committee considers that the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 67/19, according the State of Palestine the status of a non-member observer State in the United Nations, created a tangible new reality in the Middle East with far-reaching ramifications for the Palestinians, the Israelis, and for the international community, including the United Nations system. The Committee will promote a thorough analysis of the legal, political, dipiomatic and economic implications of the resolution, so as to maximize the opportunities it presents, while maintaining the momentum it generated and minimizing risks. It will support efforts by the Palestinian leadership to achieve wide international recognition of the State of Palestine within the 1967 borders.

28. As in previous years, the Committee will maintain its support of the Palestinian people and the achievement of the two-State solution through a variety of activities. The Committee will raise awareness of the achievements of the Palestinian initiative entitled "Palestine: Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State", which has laid down the foundations of a functional State, and will mobilize urgent international support to mitigate the acute financial crisis and safeguard and build on the accomplishments of the state-building programme. The Committee will continue to mobilize international aid towards alleviating the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, stimulating Palestinian economic recovery, and urging expanded international assistance to the Palestinian people. It will continue to raise awareness of the massive cumulative costs of the prolonged Israeli occupation borne by the Palestinian economy and by the international donors, and will explore ways to operationalize, within the United Nations context, the recommendations of the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, held in 2012, to document the losses, so that Israel, the occupying Power, could be held liable under international law and compelled to pay restitution. It will draw attention to the plight of Palestinian women and children, the most vulnerable segment of Palestinian society, who are suffering as a result of the occupation. The Committee will highlight the responsibility of the occupying Power for ending its illegal policies and practices, especially the settlement activity, the construction of the wall and various measures of collective punishment, and the obstruction of Palestinian development, especially in Area C and East Jerusalem. The Committee will also maintain its support for revitalized and active international involvement, including through the Quartet, the regional partners and the continued personal engagement of the Secretary-General, and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

29. The Committee attaches great importance to enhancing cooperation and coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the implementation of their respective mandates. In its resolution 67/22, the General Assembly requested the Department, inter alia, to continue to issue and update publications and audiovisual materials on the various aspects of the question of Palestine in all fields, including materials concerning relevant recent developments, in particular the efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee will continue to cooperate with the Department in carrying out the various mandated activities.

30. The Committee will continue to make an effort to encourage participation by countries and organizations that so far have not engaged fully in its programme of work.

IV. Activities of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights

A. Action by the Committee

31. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee will continue to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to participate in relevant meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Committee will also continue to monitor the situation on the ground and draw the attention of the international community to critical developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, requiring international action.

32. The Committee will continue to support the organizations and entities of the United Nations system in their work aimed at assisting the Palestinian people in various fields, and in advancing a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. In the course of the year, the Committee will continue to collaborate with those organizations and entities in pursuance of its mandate and will invite them to international events organized under its auspices.

33. The Committee, through its Bureau, will continue to participate in relevant intergovernmental and other conferences and meetings, as necessary. The Committee considers this activity an important aspect of its work in promotion of international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

34. In cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, the Committee will continue to maintain contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, as well as civil society, in the areas under its jurisdiction and in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Following the practice of previous years, the Committee will continue to invite prominent personalities, United Nations agencies and civil society representatives to its meetings at United Nations Headquarters, so as to further enrich the substantive content of its deliberations and stimulate greater interaction. The Bureau will request the Division for Palestinian Rights to conduct further orientation sessions on the work of the Committee and of the Division for incoming staff of permanent missions, as needed.

35. The Bureau of the Committee will continue consultations with Governments and intergovernmental organizations interested in its programme of work. Those exchanges should help to promote understanding of the mandate and objectives of the Committee.

B. International meetings and conferences

36. The Committee considers that its programme of international meetings and conferences implemented by the Division contributes to focusing the attention of Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and the public on the urgency of bringing about the two-State solution and mobilizing assistance to

the Palestinian people. Through its international meetings programme for 2013, the Committee intends to further generate wide support for a peaceful solution of the conflict, based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. It will continue to engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society, including youth and women, to mobilize support for a just solution to the conflict. With the assistance of the United Nations entities on the ground, it will reach out to the people most affected by the status quo, refugees and Palestinians living under occupation, to new constituencies including youth and their leaders and to members of the Israeli public to involve them in the search for solutions, to promote dialogue and common projects and to win their backing of a settlement negotiated by their leaders and supported by the international community.

37. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2013 on, inter alia, widening international support for the resumption of permanent status negotiations on the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The meetings will contribute to the creation of a favourable atmosphere for their conduct in good faith. A comprehensive examination of the implications of General Assembly resolution 67/19 under international law will generate a clearer international understanding of the legal rights and obligations emanating from the resolution, and help identify new options for the victims of wrongful acts to seek remedies under the international legal framework. The Committee intends to continue to draw the attention of the world community to the developments on the ground, in particular the settlement activities in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, the need to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to end its settlement campaign as well as all other illegal policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the legal obligation of third parties not to support or contribute to the breaches of international law by Israel and the responsibility to hold the occupying Power accountable for its breaches. The Committee will support peaceful civil society action worldwide challenging Israeli impunity and promoting the concept of Israel's accountability for its illegal actions towards the Palestinian people. The Committee will pay special attention to highlighting the plight of the most disadvantaged Palestinians, including the Palestine refugees, the Palestinians living in Gaza and Palestinian political prisoners. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for the institution- and state-building efforts of the State of Palestine and all other efforts to facilitate the independence and viability of the Palestinian State. The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, to provide a venue to have narratives heard and reconciled and to promote, with the help of civil society, peace education on the ground. It will also support and promote the empowerment of women and their organizations in this process.

38. In 2013, the Committee, in cooperation with prospective host countries, organizations and relevant Secretariat services, will do its utmost to ensure the success of its programme of meetings and conferences. In so doing, it will keep in mind the need for economy and the most cost-effective utilization of resources, reducing the environmental footprint of the Organization. It will invite the Division for Palestinian Rights to streamline documentation while making maximum use of modern information technologies. It will mobilize social media and bloggers to promote global coverage and interactivity during these events in a cost-effective way. The Committee highly appreciates the involvement in these events of

Governments, intergovernmental organizations, entities of the United Nations system, parliamentarians and civil society. It encourages them to continue and increase the level of engagement and support for a just solution to the conflict. It will strive to achieve gender and geographic balance among invited experts and will mobilize the active participation of Governments from all regional groups. The Committee will continue to carry out this programme to foster support for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with international legitimacy. The Committee, through its Bureau, will regularly assess the outcomes of the international meetings and conferences and, where required, decide on steps that could be taken to enhance their contribution to the mandated goals of the Committee, to streamline the format of the meetings and of the documentation and to increase media exposure, attendance and interactivity. It will disseminate the practical recommendations emanating from the conferences and meetings to the United Nations membership at large and systematically review them with a view to follow-up action as appropriate.

39. In 2013, the Committee intends to organize the following international events:

- United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in Rome at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on 27 and 28 February 2013, followed by consultations with civil society on 1 March 2013.
- United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine in the African region, provisionally to be held in April 2013.
- United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, to be held provisionally in May or June 2013, and to be followed by a civil society event.
- United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine in July 2013.
- United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

C. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

40. In the course of 2013, the Committee will continue to cooperate on issues relevant to its mandate with the African Union, the European Union, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States. Representatives of these organizations and groupings will be invited to lend their support to and participate in the Committee's programme of international meetings and conferences.

D. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

41. The Committee highly values the work of civil society in support of the Palestinian people. It praises the courageous advocacy actions of countless peace activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the separation wall in the West Bank and against Israel's

ongoing settlement campaign in all its manifestations, work towards ending the siege of Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the realities of life of the Palestinian people under occupation. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including the Committee, on the question of Palestine. The Committee also supports all humanitarian and assistance initiatives geared towards improving the daily lives of the Palestinian people. The Committee considers that it is particularly important to build bridges of understanding and trust between the Israeli and Palestinian civil societies and to promote common goals of peace between the two peoples. The Committee will continue to assess its programme of cooperation with civil society organizations and consult them on ways to enhance their contribution.

42. The Committee intends to continue to invite civil society organizations to all international meetings and conferences organized under its auspices. The participation in such meetings of civil society organizations, eminent personalities and parliamentarians, youth and their leadership, along with Governments and intergovernmental organizations should offer a unique opportunity to promote the exchange of views and ideas, encourage people-to-people dialogue, and develop and strengthen initiatives by all strata of the international community, with a common objective of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee believes that the meetings and conferences organized under its auspices promote Israeli-Palestinian civil society dialogue and offer a unique platform for interaction between the two sides.

43. The Committee will maintain and further develop its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms on the question of Palestine, in addition to the established liaison with a large number of individual civil society organizations. It will continue to accredit new organizations. Periodic meetings of consultations with civil society representatives will contribute to the further enhancement of the Committee's programme of cooperation with civil society.

44. The Committee is of the view that it is important to continue to exchange information with civil society on respective current and planned activities. The Committee requests the Division to obtain information and report periodically on civil society initiatives in order to enhance the interaction between civil society and the Committee. It also requests the Division to continue to issue the bimonthly online bulletin "NGO Action News" and regularly update the "Civil Society" page on the "Question of Palestine" website (www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/ngo) and the Division's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/UN.palestinianrights) as tools for the exchange of information and communication between the United Nations and civil society.

45. In 2013 the resources available for cooperation with civil society will be used for the following activities:

(a) Organization, whenever appropriate and feasible, of meetings of civil society organizations in conjunction with international meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee, or as separate meetings;

(b) Participation of representatives of the Committee and the Division in important forums and other events on the question of Palestine organized by civil society organizations in the region and worldwide;

(c) Periodic consultation meetings with civil society organizations with a view to keeping them apprised of the various activities of the Committee, encouraging better coordination and cooperation among them and with the Committee and other relevant United Nations entities, and receiving their views on the work of the United Nations and the Committee in particular;

(d) Briefings of the Committee by representatives of Israeli, Palestinian and international civil society on developments on the ground and their work in support of a peaceful realization of the two-State solution;

(e) Providing assistance to Palestinian civil society organizations in facilitating participation of their representatives in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee or supported by the Committee.

Parliaments and interparliamentary organizations

46. The Committee views its cooperation with parliamentarians worldwide as one of its programmatic priorities and will continue to develop this aspect of its work. It firmly believes that national parliaments and interparliamentary organizations play an important role in shaping public opinion, formulating policy guidelines and upholding international legitimacy in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee considers that the experience and political influence of lawmakers and their organizations can be instrumental in consolidating the democratic process and institution-building in the territory under the Palestinian Authority, strengthening political dialogue between the parties and applying the principles of international law to efforts aimed at resolving the conflict. The Committee reaffirms the continuing importance of developing closer cooperation and effective partnership with parliaments and representatives of interparliamentary bodies in order to encourage the discussion, within the respective parliaments and among all strata of society, of ways of advancing peace in the Middle East and resolving the question of Palestine. To that end, the Committee will strive to continue to involve parliamentarians and representatives of interparliamentary organizations in international conferences and meetings organized under its auspices. Consultations between the Committee and representatives of parliaments and interparliamentary organizations, at Headquarters and worldwide, should improve cooperation between the two sides on issues of common concern. The Committee attaches particular importance to involving members of the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council in events organized under its auspices.

E. Publications programme

47. The Committee considers the Division's publications programme to be an important information source and outreach activity which contributes to the heightening of international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine, the involvement of the United Nations and the work of the Committee and its mandate and objectives. The Division should continue to monitor developments relevant to the question of Palestine. It should also continue to issue, electronically and/or in print, the following publications:

- Monthly bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine

- Periodic review of developments relating to the Middle East peace process
- Monthly chronological review of events relating to the question of Palestine
- Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine
- Reports of international meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee
- Annual bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
- Bimonthly summary of civil society activities on the question of Palestine, entitled "NGO Action News", available on the "Civil Society" page on the "Question of Palestine" website
- The study entitled "The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem"

48. The Committee believes that the Division, in consultation with the Bureau, should continue to review the existing publications and make proposals with regard to those that require updating.

F. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

49. The Committee requests the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue its work on the further development, expansion and administration of the "Question of Palestine" website, including the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL). The Division will continue to ensure that the collection of documents from the United Nations and related entities held by UNISPAL is comprehensive and up to date and that its access modalities and displays are user-friendly. The Committee encourages the Division to further develop this useful facility so as to provide information to users worldwide on various aspects of the question of Palestine. The Division should also continue to provide information concerning its activities, as well as those of the Committee, through Facebook, Twitter and RSS feeds, and to alert users about newly posted materials in UNISPAL. The Committee requests the Division to report periodically to the Bureau on the status of work accomplished on the system and progress achieved in its development.

G. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

50. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, the Committee will organize the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. It is envisaged that special meetings in observance of the Day will be held on 29 November 2013 at United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna and elsewhere, in accordance with established practice. A Palestinian exhibit or a cultural event will be organized at United Nations Headquarters in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations.

H. Training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine

51. The Committee considers that, in the light of the importance and usefulness of the annual training programme to the Government of the State of Palestine, the Division, in 2013, should continue to further develop and enhance it. The Committee remains of the view that, in selecting candidates for the programme, special consideration should be given to achieving gender balance.

I. Continuing review and assessment

52. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme of work in the light of the situation on the ground and new developments in the political process and will make adjustments as necessary. It will actively seek feedback from participants in the events organized under its auspices, and from other partners, apply lessons learned and follow best practices.